

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

November 5, 2017

The Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Malachi 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10 + 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13 + Matthew 23:1-12



Reflection by: Sister Elise Redmerski, OP

Sister Jean Veronica, OP, one of the sisters with whom I lived, is now in heaven enjoying the Feast of All Saints with her family and many friends. We were both raised with an appreciation for our Polish ancestry. Just before she moved to our healthcare center, she gave me a carving that she brought back from Poland. The carving is called "Pensive Christ." It sits in my office.

There are many days that I sit and meditate with this statue. I see Jesus holding his head and I can't help but think that he is saying, "You did *what* in my name? You said *what* in my name?"

It speaks to me of today's Gospel. Jesus is asking us, "Why? Why do you tie up heavy burdens, hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders? Why do we preach what we do not practice? Why do you do good things to be noticed? Why do we need places of honor?"

"Jesus occupies in my heart," said Mahatma Gandhi, "the place of one of the greatest teachers who have had a considerable influence on my life. I shall say to the Hindus that your life will be incomplete, unless you reverentially study and live the teachings Jesus." But he goes on to say, "If it weren't for Christians, I'd be a Christian."

The word 'hypocrite' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'actor.' Jesus is calling us to authenticity not hypocrisy. So, whatever we do and whatever we are, we can't play the part. We must live it.

Image: Source unknown, "Pensive Christ," Polish Folk Art